

Luke 8:22-25

Introduction

Has this ever happened to you? You're in a supermarket looking for something but you can't find it. So, you stop someone who you think is a member of staff and ask where it is. "Can you tell me which aisle to look down?" you say. But they just look at you blankly. And then they say, "I'm sorry. I don't work here."

If that's ever happened to you then you'll know the sense of deep embarrassment that comes over you. I suspect we all know what it's like to get someone's identity wrong. But it's one thing to get someone's identity wrong in the supermarket. It's another thing altogether to get Jesus' identity wrong. And that's what this passage is about

Luke has already revealed the identity of Jesus to us, his readers. He's already told us that Jesus is the Lord. The Son of God. God incarnate. But in *this* passage, his first disciples are beginning to work that out for themselves. The first thing the passage shows us, however, is not Jesus' divinity but his humanity. So, that's our first heading: the humanity of Jesus.

The humanity of Jesus

Look again at verse 22. **One day Jesus said to his disciples, 'Let us go over to the other side of the lake.' So they got into a boat and set out. As they sailed, he fell asleep.**

I love that!

I've not spent much time in a boat. But I know what it's like to get into a *car* when you're feeling tired. You sit down in a nice soft seat. The heat from the engine gradually embraces you. The car rocks gently from side to side as it starts moving. And before you know it, your head falls forward, slumps to one side and you're fast asleep. It's happened to me more times than I care to admit. I should say, however, that it's only ever happened to me when I've been a passenger, not when I'm driving!

Jesus was fully human like you and me. He got tired like you and me. He fell asleep like you and me. He got hungry and ate like you and me. He laughed and loved like you and me. He felt sad and wept like you and me. He suffered pain and exhaustion like you and me. He experienced temptation like you and me. He is God incarnate. God in the flesh. But he didn't merely have the *appearance* of a man. He didn't merely skim over the surface of human experience. He entered into it fully. And that includes experiencing the perils and dangers of the world we live in.

Verse 23 again. **A squall came down on the lake, so that the boat was being swamped, and they were in great danger.**

The disciples went and woke him, saying, 'Master, Master, we're going to drown!'

A few weeks ago, you might have followed the news of the death of British entrepreneur, Mike Lynch, along with his daughter and five others. If you remember, they were aboard a luxury yacht when it got caught in a storm and sank off the coast of Sicily. It was a tragedy. Many are still questioning how it happened.

Fishermen who were interviewed in the days immediately afterwards questioned what the boat was doing out at sea in the first place. They had read the weather conditions themselves and knew that a storm was coming. They knew it was dangerous. So that night they had stayed in port. "I knew I shouldn't be out there that night," one of them said.

Fishermen understand weather conditions. They have to. They know when conditions are dangerous. And among Jesus' disciples there were fishermen. These were men who made their living from this lake. They knew they shouldn't be out there.

Imagine what it would have been like to be in that boat with the disciples. The wind is howling around you. Waves are crashing down on top of you. The boat is beginning to take on water. It's in danger of being swamped and going down. It would have been terrifying. And the disciples wake Jesus and cry out, **'Master, Master, we're going to drown!'**

That was no exaggeration.

And as he woke, Jesus would have taken it all in and seen the danger they were in. He would have seen the terror on the disciples' faces and heard the desperation in their voices. And that's important. God doesn't stand remote from human experience. In Jesus, he has come and experienced it firsthand. He understands our fears. He knows what we go through. He even understands our private fears. The ones we share with no one else.

Yet there's no sense of panic in Jesus. He's calm. And he does something amazing. And in what follows, we see the authority of Jesus, which is our next heading.

The authority of Jesus

Verse 24. He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm. 'Where is your faith?' he asked his disciples.

With just a command, Jesus turns chaos into calm and saves the disciples from the death they feared. And, understandably, they're awestruck. First, they had feared the storm. Now they fear the man in the boat with them.

Verse 25. In fear and amazement they asked one another, 'Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him.'

The disciples were Jews. They had been taught from childhood that it is God who has authority over the forces of nature.

Consider these verses from Psalm 135.

**The LORD does whatever pleases him,
in the heavens and on the earth,
in the seas and all their depths.
He makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth;
he sends lightning with the rain
and brings out the wind from his storehouses.**

And that is why the disciples tremble in fear. They're beginning to realise the identity of the man in the boat with them. Here is a man who possesses divine authority and acts as God acts. It's beginning to dawn on them that they're standing in the presence of God himself. I can imagine them sitting there in complete amazement, their jaws hanging wide open as they take in what he has just done.

And Jesus says to them, '**Where is your faith?**' And as the readers, it's implicitly a question for us too.

If you think back to the passage we read last week, he's asking us what kind of soil we are.

It's easy to trust Jesus when the skies are blue, and life is plain sailing. But when the storm comes... when the waves get choppy and we're feeling afraid ...when times of testing come ... are we able to trust him then? Are we able to trust that he cares about us, even when life isn't going as we want? When it hurts? When we're consumed with fear?

He is powerful. He can quiet a storm with just a word. And he is kind. He doesn't stop caring for us, even when the wind is howling and the waves are beating down on us. He has come to bring an end to our fear; to bring life out of death and hope in the place of despair. And he asks us to trust him.

That's the challenge for those of us here this morning who count ourselves his disciples. We need to pray and ask God to strengthen our faith especially when the storms come. We need to ask him to give us persevering faith that doesn't fail. It's a prayer he delights to answer.

And if you're joining us for the first time this morning, then please do keep coming. Jesus is the one person who can give you real, concrete hope in a troubled world. He asks you to trust him too. As we read through Luke's gospel and travel with his first disciples, we're going to find out more about his identity and the hope he brings. Please do join us.

And you might like to come along to a course we're running called Christianity Explored. It starts in October. It's a great way to learn who Jesus is and why he came. You can find more details on our website or by speaking with me after the service. I would be delighted to talk with you.

But, for now, let me say a prayer.

Loving Father, thank you for the hope we have in Jesus. Please help us to keep trusting in him. Give us a persevering faith that doesn't fail. And as we study this book of Luke's, please help us all to grasp fully the identity of Jesus and to put our trust unfailingly in him. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.